

WHAT ABOUT POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNS?

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES THE TIMES OF THE SIGNS

WHO IS RIGHT—THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN—THE BAPTIST—THE CAMPBELLITES OR THE PENTECOSTALISTS? CONCERNING MARK 16:14 TO 18

FROM FIRST PAGE

WHAT ABOUT THE SIGNS OF MARK 16?

WHO IS RIGHT - the PLYMOUTH BRETHREN,
the BAPTISTS, the CAMPBELLITES,
or the PENTECOSTALISTS?

THE TIMES OF THE SIGNS

First, let us ask this question, “have you ever met a zealous, sectarian Christian who was like the noble Bereans of Acts 17:11 who were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so?” These are very few unprejudiced Bible teachers, or Bible students, even among those who call themselves non-sectarian Christians. Perhaps all of us are agreed that more than ninety-five per cent of all Christians let their religious, denominational or spiritual leaders do most of their thinking for them. Because of this there are more than four hundred sects in Christendom. Let us ask this personal question, have you followed the good example of the noble Bereans in reaching a decision as to what you believe and practice as a Christian?” Will you endeavor this one time to be a Berean as you read this message?

Our question is, “what about the signs of Mark 16?” Let us note every word in Mark 16:14 to 18:

“AFTERWARD HE (CHRIST) APPEARED UNTO THE ELEVEN AS THEY SAT AT MEAT, AND UPBRAIDED THEM WITH THEIR UNBELIEF AND HARDNESS OF HEART, BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED NOT THEM WHICH HAD SEEN HIM AFTER HE WAS RISEN.” AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE. HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED.” “AND THESE SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW THEM THAT BELIEVE; IN MY NAME SHALL THEY CAST OUT DEVILS; THEY SHALL SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES; THEY SHALL TAKE UP SERPENTS: AND IF THEY DRINK ANY DEADLY THING, IT SHALL NOT HURT THEM; THEY SHALL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK, AND THEY SHALL RECOVER.”

Before we deal with these five verses in detail, let us note some words which the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul to write to Timothy more than thirty years after the resurrected Christ

gave to the Eleven the commission and program of Mark 16:14 to 18. "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust." I Timothy 1:11. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." I Timothy 1:16. "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities (sicknesses)" I Timothy 5:23.

Note "the glorious gospel of the blessed God"; use wine for thine oft sicknesses.

Note Timothy's faith and Paul's gospel: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee . . ." "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God: Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." II Timothy 1:5 to 9. This message of Paul was quite different from the message of Mark 16.

"Remember, that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the

(PAGES MISSING, MY GUESS IS TWO MAYBE FOUR AT MOST PAGES)

STAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND SHOULD BE CONVERTED, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM. BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE UNTO YOU, THAT THE SALVATION OF GOD IS SENT UNTO THE GENTILES, AND THEY WILL HEAR IT."

In Acts 28:25 to 27, we find a quotation from Isaiah 6:9 to 10. We find the same quotation in the days of the Son of man in Matthew 13:14 and 15 and John 12:40 and 41.

It will be interesting to study these three pronouncements: once, before the days of the Son of man, then during the days of the Son of man on earth, and then after the Son of man. Consider these with the parable of the vineyard in Matthew 21:33 to 46. Consider both with the pardonable and unpardonable sin of Israel in Matthew 12:30 to 32. This will teach us how God dealt with Israel nationally in three different periods.

Compare the statements in Acts 13:46, Acts 18:6, Romans 11:11 and 13, Romans 11:30 and Acts 28:28: "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles," "Henceforth I will go to the Gentiles," "Salvation sent to Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy," "Reconciliation for Gentiles because of Israel being cast away," "Mercy for Gentiles because of Israel's unbelief," "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles." When we read these facts we should think of the Lord's concluding statement in the parable of the vineyard: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matthew 21:43. But let us not take it away from them before God did.

Surely we should know that the statement in Acts 28:28, "salvation of God will be sent to the Gentiles", God meant that it would be sent to Gentiles as never before.

Every spiritual, intelligent, careful student of the Scriptures will note after the close of the "Acts" period, a decided change in God's spiritual program for members of the Body of Christ, as recorded in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and II Timothy. Those who fail to note this change are confused concerning "the signs of the times", because they do not know "the times of the signs". They will continue to stumble over the one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5.

It has been truly said that these Prison Epistles of Paul's constitute God's golden key to so unlock the Scriptures that the child of God may know how to intelligently and dispensationally interpret, appropriate and apply all Scripture given by inspiration of God: "All

Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” II Timothy 3:16. All Scripture should be studied in the light of Christ’s Pauline” truth. Let us in obedience of Philippians 1:10, “test things that differ”. Determine whether or not events took place before or after the open door of Acts 14:27, before or after the casting away of Israel and the reconciling of Gentiles Romans 11:15.

Once again we declare, that if the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 are the Christian’s credentials, there are no Christians. There will be signs again in the days of the beast and the antichrist, but this is not God’s sign age for members of the Body of Christ

Once again we say, if the Church is marching under the commission of Mark 16:14 to 18, and there has been no dispensational change since these orders were given, most assuredly the Plymouth Brethren, Baptists and Campbellites are not right and surely the fanaticism and delusion of the Pentecostalists should cause God’s “grace” preachers to revise their dispensationalism to move up from Peter and Pentecost to Paul, and after the thirteenth of Acts for the beginning of “the dispensation of the grace of God,” “the dispensation of the mystery” and the joint Body of Ephesians 3:6. If there has been no dispensational change in God’s spiritual program since Acts 2, then we had better change our program and cry with some others, “back to Pentecost”. This should be our cry if our marching orders are in Mark 16:14 to 18.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

What about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? This question will be considered with, the signs of the times ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES and ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS. In the New Testament Scriptures, especially in the Epistles of Paul, we find much in God’s spiritual program that was, not prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures.

First we quote from Matthew 24:3 the words of the apostles spoken to the Lord Jesus: “And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

Then in the verses that follow the Lord Jesus told His disciples of the signs that would indicate that His coming and Israel’s kingdom were at hand.

By carefully studying the entire twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew, the student will learn that Israel, in the midst of the signs mentioned, is in the midst of a great tribulation, and it is at that time of trouble that the Son of Man will come and then sit on the throne of His glory as the King. The twelve apostles will sit on the twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 25:31 and 32. Matthew 19:28.

In Jeremiah 30:4 to 11, and in other Scriptures, the great tribulation is foretold. It is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but Jacob all be saved out of it. Note the prophetic messages of Isaiah 11:11 and Ezekiel 37:24 to 28.

Daniel also was Jehovah’s prophet to tell about Israel and Israel’s land in the end time. He foretold many things concerning the doings of God’s one nation and the other nations in the end time.

But we emphasize the fact that neither Isaiah nor Ezekiel nor Daniel nor any other man, woman or child said one word or knew one thing concerning God’s spiritual program, which in

Ephesians and Colossians is called the “mystery,” “the mystery of Gods will,” “the mystery of Christ,” “the mystery of the gospel,” “the dispensation of the mystery,” “the mystery among the Gentiles.” Ephesians 3:3, Ephesians 1:9, Ephesians 3:4, Ephesians 6:19, Colossians 1:25 to 27

Now note these Scriptures as to the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ to take members of His body to glory. “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” I Corinthians 15:51 and 52.

For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” Philippians 3:20 and 21.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:13.

“When Christ Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” Colossians 3:4.

This translation, transformation, glorification of the members of the Body of Christ was a mystery during the years when Israel’s prophets were foretelling the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to die as the Lamb on the cross and to reign as the King on David’s throne.

Search diligently the Epistles from which we have quoted and you will notice that there is no mention of one of the signs of Matthew 24 and Luke 21, to warn the redeemed of the Lord that the day of redemption is at hand.

Some preachers confuse members of the Body of Christ by giving to these members the warnings of Luke 21:25 to 31. “look up”—“lift up your heads”—“for your redemption draweth night.” Luke 21:28.

When those Israelites “look up,” where will they be and what will they see? They will be right in the midst of Jacob’s trouble and they will see awful signs in the heavens and they will see on earth the work of the four horsemen of The Revelation and some great earthquakes and other terrible scenes.

“And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Luke 21:27.

“. . . Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8.

Christ is never mentioned as “the Son of man in His ministry to, and His union with, the members of the Body of Christ.

The Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, according to Ephesians 3:5, was not made known to the sons of men in other ages. Neither was the heavenly position and possessions, hope and calling of this Body made known to Israel’s prophets. Therefore they never prophesied one single word about the blessed hope and coming of the Lord for His Body, as revealed in Titus 2:13, Philippians 3:20 and 21 and Colossians 3:4.

From this we should learn that the events in connection with the end time of Israel and the other nations are not to take place during this present reign of grace, when God wants all men to know the difference between His earthly purpose in Christ Jesus and to see the dispensation of the mystery which was hid in God until revealed by Christ to and through Paul. Ephesians 3:9.

It is difficult to understand why this revealed mystery has remained a mystery for about 1875 years, so far as most members of Christ’s Body are concerned.

The spiritual, intelligent, careful student of the Scriptures will learn that what all the kings of Europe, Asia and Africa have been doing in this present dispensation was not in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and have not been Scriptural signs from God to convince members of the Body of Christ that the blessed hope of Titus 2:13 was at hand.

God's spiritual program today recorded in Paul's last Epistles is not in fulfillment of prophecies of the sons of men of other ages. Read carefully Colossians 1:24 to 27 and Ephesians 3:1 to 11.

The mystery among the Gentiles, the untraceable riches of Christ among the Gentiles, is not ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES (from Genesis to Malachi).

The preacher who teaches that the movements of Russia, Italy, Germany and Japan prove that we are in Israel's prophesied end time and are signs for the members of the Body of Christ, that the blessed hope is at hand, are most inconsistent, for they generally also teach with this blunder, that Paul and all premillennial Christians from Paul's day, have correctly held for the imminent coming of the Lord, the postponement of the kingdom and that the Church age is a "parenthesis" period. Such teaching discredits and repudiates the claims of Paul that he received a special Divine deposit from the risen Christ which was unprophesied.

The preacher who preaches "signs" which are in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, as proof that the Lord's coming for His saints is at hand, if consistent, must teach that the living members of the Body of Christ will be in the great tribulation when they experience the glorious appearing of the Lord, mentioned in Titus 2:13. For the coming of the Son of man, prophesied by Israel's prophets, confirmed by Christ on earth, and Peter in Acts 3, is His coming as Israel's Deliverer, when they are in the midst of Jacob's trouble.

In the light of Christ-Pauline Truth, no messenger of the Lord has Scriptural authority to teach "signs" (in fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures) and the imminent coming of the Lord. The two are irreconcilable. This inconsistent teaching is because the preachers are ignorant and disobedient concerning Ephesians 3:9, and because they do not know the difference between "the signs of the times" and "the times of the signs."

Regardless of all the doings of all the wicked rulers from Nero to Bonaparte and Kaiser Wilhelm, every true, spiritual, intelligent member of Body of Christ has scriptural right to believe that the realization of the blessed hope was not only a possibility but a probability.

Every member of the Body of Christ living today should be looking for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the Saviour, whether Hitler live or dies; whether Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin conquers or is defeated.

What folly to seek to prove that because these men are fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel 38 and Daniel 2 and 11, the blessed hope is at hand, when blessed hope has nothing to do with ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, but is a part of the mystery, ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS, concerning the members of the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, "which was not made known to the sons of men in other ages." Ephesians 3:5.

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Ephesians 1:4 and 5.

"In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." Ephesians 1:11.

Let us learn from these Scriptures and others that "predestination" is always mentioned in connection with God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.

When the Roman Empire is restored, when the king of the North does his terrible work against Israel, when the battle of Armageddon takes place, when the religious antichrist does his damnable and blasphemous work, when Israel in their own land and in other lands in unbelief are suffering in the great tribulation, under the reign of the beast and the antichrist, when their Messiah comes as their Deliverer under the guarantee of the New Covenant, when Israel shall be again planted in their own land, never to be uprooted, when King David is on the throne, when the nations learn war no more, when the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea, when all the wild animals are domesticated, when the wilderness blossoms like a rose, when the millennium of peace is a reality, when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth—all will be in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. This will be the “restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:21. The King shall say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:34.

We see that all this is FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD.”

But none of all this fulfillment of prophecy has anything to do with God unprophesied program. Note the contrast in the eternity of grace in Timothy 1:9 and Ephesians 2:7.

“Who hath saved us and called with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began II Timothy 1:9

“That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:7.

Remember, whenever this ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD is mentioned, it is always mentioned in connection with “predestination” and not something prophesied since the world began. Let us obey God and test things that differ: “So that ye may test the thing that differ; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. Philippians 1:10.

Some of the messages which Paul proclaimed were in fulfillment of the prophecies of Israel’s Old Testament prophets. Concerning other messages proclaimed by Paul, every Old Testament prophet was not only silent, but ignorant. Therefore the words of Paul: “the mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men.” Ephesians 3:5.

Thus we see, in “rightly dividing the Word of Truth,” or “testing things that differ,” we must distinguish between the ministry and messages of Peter and the Eleven, in the first chapters Acts, and the “revelation” ministry which Christ committed to Paul, the “UNSEARCHABLE” riches of Christ among the Gentiles.

Also we must distinguish between the “confirmation” ministry and the “revelation” ministry, which Christ committed to Paul. In other words, for the intelligent study, interpretation, appropriation and application of the Scriptures, it is imperative that the student know the difference between Divine Truth in the Book of Acts and in the Epistles of the apostles that was “ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES,” ACCORDING TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST JESUS.”

Other phrases are used in the Bible to express the same meaning as, “ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES” Some of those other phrases are, “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled”; “to this agree the words of the prophets”; or “none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.”

“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” Note how this is stated in Acts 13:29 and 30: “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre, But God raised Him from the dead.”

When was the Lord Jesus Christ taken down from the tree and buried? When they had fulfilled (finished) all that was written of Him.

The Lord Jesus said, “think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven or earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew 5:18.

Compare and contrast these statements with Colossians 1:25 and 26. “Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, TO FULFILL THE WORD OF GOD. Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages “ and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.”

There is a great difference between fulfilling that which Moses, the lawgiver, and all of God’s prophets, before the birth of Christ, foretold, and that which Christ from heaven, in resurrection, gave to Paul to complete.

The mystery, which Paul received from Christ, was to complete the Word of God with Divine Truth which was not made known to Moses and Israel’s prophets. Compare and contrast the meaning of, “ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES” (I Corinthians 15:3), with the expression in Ephesians 3:11, “ACCORDING TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST JESUS.”

But now concerning the statement, “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him (Christ) they took Him down from the tree and put Him in a sepulchre, but God raised Him from the dead.” All that is written concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, as Israel’s King and Messiah, reigning on David’s throne, in His earthly kingdom glory, has not been fulfilled. The Son of God is to have a wonderful ministry on this earth, as “Wonderful,” and “Prince of Peace,” (Isaiah 9:6 and 7) and that will be ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES (from Genesis to Malachi).

However the present ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is in the heavenlies, far above all earthly places, as Head of a company of saints, who are seated with Him and blessed with Him in the heavenlies, is not ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES (from Genesis to Malachi) Ephesians 1:19 to 22. But this is ACCORDING TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST JESUS. Ephesians 3:11.

The once-for-all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, unlike many other events was both ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES and ACCORDING TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE, for we read, in I Peter 1:19 to 21, of Christ, as “ a Lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.”

Let us now note the words of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth recorded in Luke 24:25 to 27: “Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

Christ declared that Moses and all of Israel’s prophets wrote of Him. He declared that any one who does not believe all that these holy men of old wrote about His sufferings and glory (I Peter 1:11), is a fool. Are you a fool? If not, then you surely believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth and fulfill Isaiah 9:6 and 7 and Matthew 25:31 to 41. Note Matthew 25:31: “When the Son of man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.”

When Jesus Christ was on earth, in the land of the Jews, His circumcision ministry was a ministry of confirmation. He was confirming to Israel promises which God made to Israel by Israel's prophets. Romans 15:8.

Peter and the Eleven also carried on a ministry of confirmation, not only before the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, but beginning with the day of Pentecost and for some years thereafter. Hebrews 2:3 and 4.

After we have summed up all that the prophets, from Moses to Malachi, foretold, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and Gentile salvation (aside from the foreordained death of Christ) we will not find one hint or suggestion of the Divine Truth defined the "unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles."

Surely we see the difference between "ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES" and "ACCORDING TO GODS ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST."

Moreover, there is a difference between the Gospel, the death and resurrection of Christ, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, and the MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL, which was ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD, for which Paul was an ambassador in bonds. Ephesians 6:20.

Note again Paul's statement in Colossians 1:25 and 26: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me you, to fulfill the Word of God; Even the mystery, which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifests to His saints."

Certainly Peter and the Eleven had a dispensation committed to them, and they were presenting the Lord's Divine program in Acts, chapters 1 to 11. That dispensation was not "the dispensation of the mystery" of Ephesians 3:9, nor "the dispensation of the grace of God" of Ephesians 3:2, nor "the mystery concerning the Joint-Body" of Ephesians 3:5 and 6, nor "the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles" of Ephesians 3:8, nor "God's purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world." mentioned in II Timothy 1:9.

Note what the Lord is yet to do for Israel under the guarantee of the Old Covenant: "And they shall not teach every man His neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 8:11 and 12.

This covenant blessing for Israel is prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31 to 37.

But in all the Scriptures, from Genesis to Malachi, there is not a hint concerning the heavenly position and blessings of the saved Gentiles under the dispensation of the grace of God mentioned in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

And let us keep in mind that the spiritual program for God's people during this present age is not a program of religion; is not a program that Israel's prophets foretold.

What believers have today is a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, and not the Christian religion, or any other religion. We have eternal life and Christ is our life. In the matter of the return of the Lord for the members of His Body these members are not to look for "signs" but for the Son.

We are waiting for a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, OUR LIFE. Then shall we also appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:3 and 4.